

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for determining inventory comprising:
a fixture including a first region and adapted to hold a first collection of merchandise, the first collection of merchandise comprising at least one item with an associated RFID tag;
a reader disposed on the fixture and proximate the collection of merchandise, and the reader adapted to interrogate the RFID tag and retrieve information related to the RFID tag.
2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the first collection of merchandise includes a second item with an associated RFID tag.
3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the fixture is adapted to hold a second collection of merchandise and wherein a second reader is disposed on the fixture and proximate the second collection of merchandise, and wherein the second reader is adapted to interrogate and read a second RFID tag associated with the second collection of merchandise.
4. The system according to claim 3, wherein the first reader is adapted to read the first collection of merchandise but is not adapted to read the second collection of merchandise.
5. The system according to claim 4, wherein the second reader is adapted to read the second collection of merchandise but is not adapted to read the first collection of merchandise.
6. The system according to claim 1, wherein the fixture is capable of sensing available inventory disposed on the fixture in near real time.

7. The system according to claim 1, wherein the fixture is capable of sensing whether the item is properly located on the fixture.

8. A method for determining inventory comprising the steps of:

- (a) associating a first RFID tag with a first item of merchandise;
- (b) placing the first item proximate a first location of a fixture;
- (c) placing a first RFID reader proximate the first location of the fixture; and
- (d) interrogating the RFID tag associated with the item with the reader.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising the step of associating a second RFID tag with a second item of merchandise and placing the second item proximate the first location.

10. The method according to claim 9, further comprising the step of associating a third RFID tag with a third item of merchandise and placing the third item proximate a second location of the fixture.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the first reader interrogates at least one RFID tag in the first location but does not interrogate the third RFID tag.

12. The method according to claim 10, wherein the first reader interrogates at least one RFID tag in the first location but does not interrogate the third RFID tag.

13. A method for obtaining inventory information comprising the steps of:
- (a) associating a first RFID tag with a first item of merchandise;
 - (b) placing the first item proximate a first location of a fixture;
 - (c) placing a first RFID reader proximate the first location of the fixture;
 - (d) interrogating the RFID tag associated with the item with a wireless handheld device.
14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the wireless handheld device receives information related to an FRID tag.
15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the wireless handheld device interrogates RFID tags and determines if a particular RFID tag matches the information received.
16. The method according to claim 15, wherein the wireless handheld device responds with a signal if a particular RFID tag matches the information received.
17. The method according to claim 16, wherein the signal is audible.
18. The method according to claim 13, wherein the wireless handheld device can interrogate a plurality of RFID tags and collect information related to those tags in order to determine available inventory.

19. A system for using radio frequency identification (RFID) in a supply chain of a retail operation organization, the system comprising:

an RFID tag is associated with each item to be tracked;

a plurality of tag readers disposed at various locations throughout the supply chain;

at least one host computer for receiving and processing information from the tag readers and interfacing with a system used for at least one of inventory, operations and logistics.

20. The system according to claim 19, wherein the at least one host computer for receiving and processing information from the tag readers interfaces with a system used for inventory and a system used for logistics.

21. A method for using radio frequency identification (RFID) in retail operations, the method comprising the steps of:

associating an RFID tag with each item to be tracked;

placing a plurality of tag readers at locations throughout the supply chain; and

providing at least one host computer for receiving and processing information from the tag readers and interfacing with at least one of: inventory, operations and logistics systems.

22. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the step of associating an RFID tag with each item to be tracked comprises step of sewing an RFID tag into a garment; and

wherein the method further comprises the step of storing vendor/manufacture identification information in the RFID memory to enable the tracking of customer returns due to poor quality of merchandise produced by the vendor/manufacture.

23. The method according to Claim 21, further comprising the step of performing a statistical analysis of returns by vendor/manufacturer.

24. The method according to Claim 21, further comprising the steps of: scanning the RFID tagged units before delivering to the poolers and during store delivery to determine discrepancies and provide the documentation to support freight claims whereby freight losses can be recouped.

25. The method according to Claim 21, further comprising the steps of using RFID technology to scan RFID tagged goods in the storage when an item is not in stock on the sales floor, whereby the method is used to reduce lost sales due to merchandise not on the sales floor, comprising the steps of collecting and storing data concerning items in storage collection and storing data concerning items in stock on the sales floor and comparing the data to identify items that are in storage, but not in stock on the sales floor.

26. The method according to Claim 21, further comprising using RFID technology to track fitting room traffic comprising the steps of placing antennas proximate an entrance of one or more fitting rooms to read RFID tags that are brought into the one or more fitting rooms; collecting data related to the identity of products taken into the one or more fitting rooms as an indicia of consumer interest.

27. The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of correlating the fitting room data with other data, wherein the other data is sales data.

28. The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of correlating the fitting room data with other data, wherein the other data is shelf location data.

29. The method according to Claim 21, wherein the RFID tag is a read/write tag.

30. The method according to Claim 21, comprising the steps of: providing hand held readers for inventory counts; receiving data received from the readers and interfacing the data with the store inventory system, whereby continuous inventory counts can be performed.

31. The method according to Claim 21, comprising the steps of: providing readers proximate merchandise for automated inventory count; receiving data received from the readers and interfacing the data with the store inventory system, whereby continuous inventory counts can be performed.

32. The method for using radio frequency identification in retail operations according to Claim 21, further comprising the step of comparing data identifying items on the sales floor to data identifying items that are in stock to determine items in stock that are not on display; and providing notice of such condition.